

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ASUNCI 03284 101646Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 SCA-01 IO-13 MCT-01 SY-05
CU-04 ACDA-07 COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /094 W
-----073799 101825Z /46

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 827

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3284

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PA

SUBJECT: REPORT OF TORTURE OF RECENT POLITICAL DETAINEES

REF: (A) ASUNCION 3203, (B) ASUNCION 3073

1. SUMMARY: THE EMBASSY IS RECEIVING RELIABLE REPORTS THAT SOME OF THE RECENT DETAINEES HAVE BEEN TORTURED BY THE INVESTIGATIONS POLICE. SEVEN PERSONS ARE STILL IN DETENTION FOLLOWING THE RELEASE OF FOUR OVER THE WEEKEND. INTERIOR MINISTER MONTANARO, TAKING CREDIT FOR THE ARRESTS, BUT DENYING ANY TORTURE, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE SEVEN WILL BE TRIED FOR SUBVERSION. THE REASONS FOR THE ARRESTS REMAIN MURKY AND FEW LOCAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE OFFICIAL VERSION. THE MOST CONVINCING THEORY IS THAT INVESTIGATIONS CHIEF PASTOR CORONEL, WHO ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT THE DETENTION, WANTED TO SHOW PRESIDENT STROESSNER HE CAN STILL BE COUNTED ON TO FERRET OUT COMMUNIST AND OTHER SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. WE ARE RECEIVING REPORTS FROM WHAT WE BELIEVE ARE RELIABLE SOURCES (INCLUDING ONE RECENTLY RELEASED DETAINEE WHO SAYS HE IS PREPARE TO TESTIFY PUBLICLY) THAT SEVERAL OF THE CURRENT GROUP OF POLITICAL DETAINEES HAVE BEEN TORTURED WHILE UNDERGOING INTERROGATION BY THE INVESTIGATIONS POLICE. TWO MOST OFTEN CITED ARE DR. JUAN FELIX BOGADO GONDRA - WHO IS SAID TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ASUNCI 03284 101646Z

HAVE BEEN BETEN AND SUBMERGED IN THE INFAMOUS "PILETA" TO EXTRACT HIS CONFESSION THAT HE WAS A COMMUNIST ORGANIZER - AND DR. JORGE CANESE.

3. UNACCOUNTABLY, THOUGH BOGADO GONDRA AND CANESE, TOGETHER WITH THEIR BROTHERS BASILIO BOGADO AND RICARDO CANESE (BOTH FUGITIVES), AND JUAN MANUEL MARCOS, WERE IDENTIFIED IN BOGADO'S

CONFESSION AS BEING THE NUCLEUS OF THE ALLEGED COMMUNISTS CELL THE POLICE CLAIM TO HAVE SMASHED. MARCOS WAS SET FREE AFTER THREE DAYS (REF A).

4. IN ADDITION TO MARCOS, LUIS AGUILERA, OSVALDO NUNEZ AND JOSE CARLOS RODRIGUEZ ALCALA WERE RELEASED OVER THE WEEKEND.

5. AS OF AUGUST 9, SEVEN WERE STILL IN DETENTION AND ARE TO STAND TRIAL FOR SUBVERSION: BOGADO GONDRA, JORGE CANESE, JOSE NICOLAS MORINIGO, ANTONIO VALENZUELA PECCI, ADOLFO MARCELINO FERREIRO, EDUARDO ARCE SHERER, AND FRANCISCO OSCAR RODRIGUEZ CAMPUZANO. THE LAST-NAMED IS EMPLOYED BY MARANDU-88, AN INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION-BACKED INDIAN WLFARE PROJECT.

6. MINITER OF INTERIOR MONTANARO HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 9 INWHICH HE ANNOUNCED THAT THE SEVEN WHO ARE TO BE TRIED HAD BEEN SEEKING TO REACTIVATE THE POLITICO-MILITARY ORGANIZATION (OPM), A SUBVERSIVE/TERRORIST GROUP WHICH WAS CRUSHED BY THE SECURITY FORCES FOLLOWING A SHOOT-OUT WITH POLICE IN ASUNCION IN APRIL 1976. MONTANARO GAVE CREDIT TO THE ANTI-SUBVERSIVE UNIT OF HIS MINISTRY FOR DISCOVERING THIS LATEST ALLEGED PLOT "TO OVERTHROW GENERAL STROESSNER'. GOVERNMENT", WITHOUT MENTIONING THE INVESTIGATIONS POLICE AT ALL. HE REFUED TO GIVE MANY DETAILS, SAYING HE DID NOT WISH TO REVEAL THE PROSECUTION'S CASE IN ADVANCE.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ASUNCI 03284 101646Z

7. THE MINISTER DENIED THAT ANY OF THE PRISONERS HAD BEEN MISTREATED, AND OFFERED TO LET PRESS REPRESENTATIVES VISIT THEM, "JUST AS THEIR FAMILIES DO." NOTE: TO DATE, WE UNDERSTAND NO RELATIVES HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO SEE ANY OF THESE PRISONERS.

8. MONTANARO NOTWITHSTANDING, MOST INFORMED SOURCES, INCLUDING SOME GOVERNMENTAL, APPEAR TO DISCOUNT THE VERACITY OF THIS LATEST ALLEGED ANTI-GOVERNMENT PLOT UNCOVERED BY THE ALWAYS ZEALOUS CHIEF OF INVESTIGATIONS, PASTOR CORONEL. BOGADO'S "CONFESSION" (COPIES OF WHICH ARE CIRCULATING FREELY) WHEN READ TO A SPECIAL PROTEST MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATON OF PARAGUAYAN MEDICAL DOCTORS AND MEDICAL STUDENTS OVER THE WEEKEND MET WITH HOOTS OF DISBELIEF, DERISION AND CONTEMPT.

9. THE MOST WIDELY CREDITED EXPLANATION FOR THE INVESTIGATIONS POLICE (NOT INTERIOR MINISTRY) ACTION IS THAT PASTOR CORONEL HAS LATELY GROWN INCREASINGLY UNCERTAIN AS TO HIS OWN PROFESSIONAL FUTURE UNDER THE MOUNTING PRESSURE ON THE GOP BY THE US AND OTHERS TO IMPROVE ITS HUMAN RIGHTS STANCE AND TO ABJUREPST PRACTICES SUCH AS TORTURE. AS A RESULT, HE IS SAID TO HAVE ORDERED

THE LATEST ARRESTS AND EXTRACTED BOGADO'S CONFESSION TO
DEMONSTRATE TO PRESIDENT STROESSNER HIS INDISPENSABILITY AND HIS
CONTIUED ABILITY TO FERRET OUT COMMUNISTS AND OTHER SUBVERSIVE
ELEMENTS.

10. IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY MORE CONVINCING THEORY, THIS MAKES AS
MUCH SENSE AS ANY WE HAVE HEARD TO DATE. WHAT IS DISTURBING IS
THAT NOTWITHSTANDING OUR ADMONITIONS TO THE GOP, THE CURRENT
WORLD CLIMATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AND ASSURANCES TO ALL INCLUDING
MOST RECENTLY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTERNATONAL LEAGUE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS (STEPHANSKY VISIT), TORTURE IS STILL BEING EMPLOYED
HERE.
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Message Attributes

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